

10/804273

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PATENT HR

Docket No. 294.00160120

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): Marc S. GORANS

Patent No.: 7,066,112

Issued: June 27, 2006

For: AUTOMATED POULTRY PROCESSING METHOD AND SYSTEM

REQUEST FOR CORRECTED CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Attention Certificate of Correction Branch
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Certificate
MAR 29 2007
of Correction

Sir:

A Certificate of Correction was issued on February 27, 2007 to correct printing errors appearing in the above-identified United States patent. However, errors were made on the Certificate of Correction. Enclosed is a marked up copy of the Certificate of Correction showing the errors and two copies of the text noting the corrections for the Certificate. Since none of the errors listed are due to Applicant's mistake, no fee is necessary for the Certificate. The corrections in the proposed Certificate of Correction do not involve such changes in the patent as would constitute new matter or would require reexamination.

Please mail a corrected Certificate of Correction to the undersigned attorney.

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8:

The undersigned hereby certifies that this paper is being deposited in the United States Postal Service, as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Attention Certificate of Corrections Branch, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 22nd day of MARCH, 2007

Signature: KW Raasch
Name: KEVIN W. RAASCH

22 MAR. 2007
Date

Respectfully submitted

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 7,066,112 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 10/804273
DATED : June 27, 2006
INVENTOR(S) : Marc S. Gorans

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Col. ¹⁶~~11~~, Line 14, Claim 1, delete "cater" and insert --carrier--.

Col. 17, Line ²⁵~~24~~, Claim 14, delete "hatching" and insert --hatchling--.

Col. 18, Line 58, Claim 32, delete "according claim" and insert --according to claim--.



Signed and Sealed this

Twenty-seventh Day of February, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon W. Dudas".

JON W. DUDAS

Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO.: 7,066,112

DATED: June 27, 2006

INVENTOR(S): Marc S. GORANS

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 16, line 14, claim 1, delete "cater" and insert –carrier–.

Column 17, line 25, claim 14, delete "hatching" and insert –hatchling–.

Column 18, line 58, claim 32, delete "according claim" and insert –according to claim–.

MAILING ADDRESS OF SENDER:

PATENT NO. 7,066,112

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1 of 1



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): Marc S. GORANS

Docket No.: 294.00160120

Patent No.: 7,066,112

Issued: June 27, 2006

Title: **AUTOMATED POULTRY PROCESSING METHOD AND SYSTEM**

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
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We are transmitting the following documents along with this Transmittal Sheet (which is submitted in triplicate):

- ☒ **Small entity status is entitled to be asserted in the above-identified application.**
- ☒ An itemized return postcard.
- ☒ Other: Request for Corrected Certificate of Correction (1 pg); copy of Certificate of Correction with errors marked (1 pg); two copies of the text noting the corrections for the Certificate (4 pgs); and Certificate of Correction (1 pg).

Please consider this a PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME for a sufficient number of months to enter these papers and please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4895. Triplicate copies of this sheet are enclosed.

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this Transmittal Letter and the paper(s), as described hereinabove, are being deposited in the United States Postal Service, as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Attention Certificate of Correction Branch, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 22nd day of MARCH, 2007.

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(SMALL ENTITY TRANSMITTAL UNDER RULE 1.8)



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): Marc S. GORANS

Docket No.: 294.00160120

Patent No.: 7,066,112



Issued: June 27, 2006

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By: Kevin W. Raasch

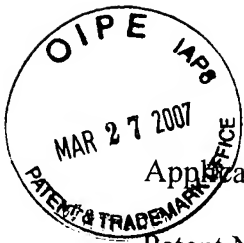
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15

poultry carrier 575, then the next processing station may be the holding/staging station 594. In FIG. 7, the unloading station 596 is ready to receive a poultry carrier, so the next processing station will be the unloading station 596. The control system may perform the operations as described in FIG. 6 to transfer the poultry carrier from the claw treatment station 593 to the unloading station 596.

The unloading station 596 may remove the poultry from the poultry carrier and may place the processed poultry in some type of container. The output of the unloading station 596 may be to place processed poultry in some type of container 597. An example of an unloading station 596 would be a boxing station, in which poultry may be removed from the poultry carrier and placed in a box. The unloading station 596 may be manual, such that a person removes the poultry from the poultry carrier and places it in the shipping container, or it may be automated such that the unloading station includes a mechanism to remove the poultry from the poultry carrier and place the poultry in a container.

After the poultry has been unloaded from the poultry carrier and loaded into a container, the unloading station 596 may provide information to the control system related to the operation. For example, such information may include the ID tag of the poultry carrier and the time the poultry was unloaded from the poultry carrier.

In some systems and methods, it may be preferred to segregate poultry at the unloading station 596 based on one or more physical characteristics (e.g., gender, size, etc.) and/or based on one or more processes that may have been performed on the poultry (e.g., inoculations, beak treatments, claw treatments, etc.). Such segregation may provide an opportunity for the processor to provide poultry that meet some desired criteria based on physical characteristics, processes performed on the poultry, etc.

FIG. 7 also depicts a holding/staging station 594, which was not part of the processing sequence 598, but is included in the flow control algorithm 500. A holding/staging station 594 may be used, for example, as a temporary holding area for poultry carriers awaiting subsequent processing. For example, in FIG. 7, the holding/staging station 594 may be used to hold poultry carriers waiting to move to the unloading station 596.

In other systems/methods, a holding/staging station could be used at any point in the processing of poultry to, e.g., age poultry if the accuracy of an automated sexing operation could be increased with age. In still other systems/methods, a separate holding/staging station could be used to provide time for analysis of data collected at different station, to provide time for analysis or testing of tissue collected from poultry at a different station, to provide time for an agent introduced into a bird or embryo to act (e.g., a pharmaceutical agent, etc.), or for any other purpose for which it is desired to retain control over individual, identifiable poultry within the system/method.

Once a poultry carrier enters the holding/staging station 594, the holding/staging station 594 may provide information to the control system related to the operation. For example, such information may include the ID tag of the poultry carrier and the time the poultry entered the holding/staging station.

Additional examples of types of processing stations that may be used in the system include, but are not limited to inoculation stations (such as, for example, the stations described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/702,988, titled APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR NASAL DELIVERY OF COMPOSITIONS TO BIRDS, filed on

16

Nov. 6, 2003, gavage stations, marking stations, tissue sampling stations, diagnostic stations, etc.

All references cited herein are incorporated in their entirety as if each were incorporated separately. This invention has been described with reference to illustrative embodiments and is not meant to be construed in a limiting sense. Various modifications of the illustrative embodiments, as well as additional embodiments of the invention, will be apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to this description.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for processing poultry, the method comprising:

loading individual poultry into each poultry carrier of a plurality of poultry carriers to provide a plurality of loaded poultry carriers, wherein each loaded poultry carrier is capable of restraining only one individual poultry at a time;

determining a processing sequence in a processing system comprising a plurality of processing stations for each loaded poultry carrier, wherein determining the processing sequence comprises selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the poultry will undergo processing;

processing the individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers in the two or more selected processing stations of the processing sequence; and

transporting each loaded poultry carrier between the two or more processing stations using an automated conveying system connecting the plurality of processing stations;

wherein each poultry carrier comprises an identification tag associated therewith;

and wherein the processing sequences for two or more of the loaded poultry carriers are different.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of processing stations comprises at least one data collection station at which poultry data is collected and at least one functional station at which poultry is changed, and further wherein selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing comprises selecting at least one data collection station and at least one functional station.

3. A method according to claim 1, further comprising assigning the identification tag to each poultry carrier.

4. A method according to claim 1, further comprising assigning the identification tag to the poultry carrier after loading the poultry carrier, wherein at least a portion of the identification tag is based on a characteristic of the individual poultry in the loaded poultry carrier.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein determining the processing sequence for the individual poultry in each loaded poultry carrier comprises selecting the two or more processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing before processing the individual poultry at any of the selected processing stations of the processing sequence.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein determining the processing sequence for the individual poultry in each loaded poultry carrier comprises selecting at least one of the two or more processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing after processing the individual poultry in at least one of the two or more processing stations of the processing sequence.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the transporting comprises transporting each loaded poultry carrier only

carrier

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to the selected two or more processing stations of the processing sequence for the loaded poultry carrier.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the transporting comprises transporting each loaded poultry carrier through all of the processing stations of the plurality of processing stations, and further wherein each loaded poultry carrier is processed only at the selected two or more processing stations of the processing sequence for that loaded poultry carrier.

9. A method according to claim 1, further comprising identifying a characteristic of each individual poultry in the loaded poultry carriers, wherein determining the processing sequence is at least partially based on the identified characteristic of the individual poultry in the loaded poultry carrier.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the identified characteristic comprises species or breed of the poultry.

11. A method according to claim 9, wherein the identified characteristic comprises weight of the poultry.

12. A method according to claim 9, wherein the identified characteristic comprises gender of the poultry.

13. A method according to claim 1, further comprising storing information related to each individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers in a database.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the identification tag associated with each hatching carrier comprises the information.

15. A method according to claim 13, wherein the information comprises an image of the individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers.

16. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a cleaning station.

17. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a weighing station.

18. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a sexing station.

19. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a beak treatment station.

20. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a claw treatment station.

21. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises an imaging station.

22. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a holding station.

23. A method according to claim 1, wherein the individual poultry comprises a hatchling.

24. A method according to claim 1, wherein the individual poultry comprises an embryo.

25. A method for processing poultry, the method comprising:

loading individual poultry into each poultry carrier of a plurality of poultry carriers to provide a plurality of loaded poultry carriers, wherein each loaded poultry carrier is capable of restraining only one individual poultry at a time;

assigning an identification tag to each poultry carrier; determining a processing sequence in a processing system comprising a plurality of processing stations for each loaded poultry carrier, wherein determining the processing sequence comprises selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the individual poultry

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will undergo processing, wherein the plurality of processing stations comprises at least one data collection station at which poultry data is collected and at least one functional station at which poultry is changed, and further wherein selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing comprises selecting at least one data collection station and at least one functional station;

identifying a characteristic of each individual poultry in the loaded poultry carriers, wherein determining the processing sequence is at least partially based on the identified characteristic of the individual poultry in the loaded poultry carrier;

processing the individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers in the two or more selected processing stations of the processing sequence; and transporting each loaded poultry carrier between the two or more processing stations using an automated conveying system connecting the plurality of processing stations;

wherein the processing sequences for two or more of the loaded poultry carriers are different.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the individual poultry comprises a hatchling.

27. A method according to claim 25, wherein the individual poultry comprises an embryo.

28. An automated poultry processing system comprising: a plurality of processing stations comprising at least one data collection station capable of collecting data regarding individual poultry and at least one functional station capable of changing the individual poultry; an automated conveying system connecting the plurality of processing stations;

a plurality of poultry carriers adapted to travel along the automated conveying system between the plurality of processing stations, wherein each poultry carrier is capable of restraining only one individual poultry at a time;

an identification tag associated with each poultry carrier of the plurality of poultry carriers; and

a control system operatively connected to the automated conveying system and the plurality of processing stations, the control system routing the plurality of poultry carriers along the automated conveying system and activating the plurality of processing stations as needed.

29. A system according to claim 28, wherein the plurality of processing stations comprises a weighing station, a beak treatment station, and a claw treatment station.

30. A system according to claim 28, wherein control system comprises a central controller controlling the automated conveying system and the plurality of processing stations.

31. A system according to claim 28, wherein the control system comprises a distributed control system comprising two or more computing elements controlling different components of the automated poultry processing system.

32. A system according to claim 28, wherein the automated conveying system connects one or more of the processing stations in a parallel configuration.

33. A system according to claim 28, wherein the automated conveying system connects the one or more of the processing stations in a serial configuration.

34. A system according to claim 28, wherein one or more of the processing stations comprise two or more bays.

hatchling

insert
"to"

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poultry carrier 575, then the next processing station may be the holding/staging station 594. In FIG. 7, the unloading station 596 is ready to receive a poultry carrier, so the next processing station will be the unloading station 596. The control system may perform the operations as described in FIG. 6 to transfer the poultry carrier from the claw treatment station 593 to the unloading station 596.

The unloading station 596 may remove the poultry from the poultry carrier and may place the processed poultry in some type of container. The output of the unloading station 596 may be to place processed poultry in some type of container 597. An example of an unloading station 596 would be a boxing station, in which poultry may be removed from the poultry carrier and placed in a box. The unloading station 596 may be manual, such that a person removes the poultry from the poultry carrier and places it in the shipping container, or it may be automated such that the unloading station includes a mechanism to remove the poultry from the poultry carrier and place the poultry in a container.

After the poultry has been unloaded from the poultry carrier and loaded into a container, the unloading station 596 may provide information to the control system related to the operation. For example, such information may include the ID tag of the poultry carrier and the time the poultry was unloaded from the poultry carrier.

In some systems and methods, it may be preferred to segregate poultry at the unloading station 596 based on one or more physical characteristics (e.g., gender, size, etc.) and/or based on one or more processes that may have been performed on the poultry (e.g., inoculations, beak treatments, claw treatments, etc.). Such segregation may provide an opportunity for the processor to provide poultry that meet some desired criteria based on physical characteristics, processes performed on the poultry, etc.

FIG. 7 also depicts a holding/staging station 594, which was not part of the processing sequence 598, but is included in the flow control algorithm 500. A holding/staging station 594 may be used, for example, as a temporary holding area for poultry carriers awaiting subsequent processing. For example, in FIG. 7, the holding/staging station 594 may be used to hold poultry carriers waiting to move to the unloading station 596.

In other systems/methods, a holding/staging station could be used at any point in the processing of poultry to, e.g., age poultry if the accuracy of an automated sexing operation could be increased with age. In still other systems/methods, a separate holding/staging station could be used to provide time for analysis of data collected at different station, to provide time for analysis or testing of tissue collected from poultry at a different station, to provide time for an agent introduced into a bird or embryo to act (e.g., a pharmaceutical agent, etc.), or for any other purpose for which it is desired to retain control over individual, identifiable poultry within the system/method.

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The invention claimed is:

1. A method for processing poultry, the method comprising:

loading individual poultry into each poultry carrier of a plurality of poultry carriers to provide a plurality of loaded poultry carriers, wherein each loaded poultry carrier is capable of restraining only one individual poultry at a time;

determining a processing sequence in a processing system comprising a plurality of processing stations for each loaded poultry carrier, wherein determining the processing sequence comprises selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the poultry will undergo processing;

processing the individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers in the two or more selected processing stations of the processing sequence; and

transporting each loaded poultry carrier between the two or more processing stations using an automated conveying system connecting the plurality of processing stations;

wherein each poultry carrier comprises an identification tag associated therewith;

and wherein the processing sequences for two or more of the loaded poultry carriers are different.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of processing stations comprises at least one data collection station at which poultry data is collected and at least one functional station at which poultry is changed, and further wherein selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing comprises selecting at least one data collection station and at least one functional station.

3. A method according to claim 1, further comprising assigning the identification tag to each poultry carrier.

4. A method according to claim 1, further comprising assigning the identification tag to the poultry carrier after loading the poultry carrier, wherein at least a portion of the identification tag is based on a characteristic of the individual poultry in the loaded poultry carrier.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein determining the processing sequence for the individual poultry in each loaded poultry carrier comprises selecting the two or more processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing before processing the individual poultry at any of the selected processing stations of the processing sequence.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein determining the processing sequence for the individual poultry in each loaded poultry carrier comprises selecting at least one of the two or more processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing after processing the individual poultry in at least one of the two or more processing stations of the processing sequence.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the transporting comprises transporting each loaded poultry carrier only

carrier

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to the selected two or more processing stations of the processing sequence for the loaded poultry carrier.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the transporting comprises transporting each loaded poultry carrier through all of the processing stations of the plurality of processing stations, and further wherein each loaded poultry carrier is processed only at the selected two or more processing stations of the processing sequence for that loaded poultry carrier.

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10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the identified characteristic comprises species or breed of the poultry.

11. A method according to claim 9, wherein the identified characteristic comprises weight of the poultry.

12. A method according to claim 9, wherein the identified characteristic comprises gender of the poultry.

13. A method according to claim 1, further comprising storing information related to each individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers in a database.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the identification tag associated with each hatchling carrier comprises the information.

15. A method according to claim 13, wherein the information comprises an image of the individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers.

16. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a cleaning station.

17. A method according to claim 1, wherein a processing station of the plurality of processing stations comprises a weighing station.

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25. A method for processing poultry, the method comprising:

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assigning an identification tag to each poultry carrier; determining a processing sequence in a processing system comprising a plurality of processing stations for each loaded poultry carrier, wherein determining the processing sequence comprises selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the individual poultry

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will undergo processing, wherein the plurality of processing stations comprises at least one data collection station at which poultry data is collected and at least one functional station at which poultry is changed, and further wherein selecting two or more of the processing stations at which the individual poultry will undergo processing comprises selecting at least one data collection station and at least one functional station;

identifying a characteristic of each individual poultry in the loaded poultry carriers, wherein determining the processing sequence is at least partially based on the identified characteristic of the individual poultry in the loaded poultry carrier;

processing the individual poultry in each of the loaded poultry carriers in the two or more selected processing stations of the processing sequence; and

transporting each loaded poultry carrier between the two or more processing stations using an automated conveying system connecting the plurality of processing stations;

wherein the processing sequences for two or more of the loaded poultry carriers are different.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the individual poultry comprises a hatchling.

27. A method according to claim 25, wherein the individual poultry comprises an embryo.

28. An automated poultry processing system comprising: a plurality of processing stations comprising at least one data collection station capable of collecting data regarding individual poultry and at least one functional station capable of changing the individual poultry; an automated conveying system connecting the plurality of processing stations;

a plurality of poultry carriers adapted to travel along the automated conveying system between the plurality of processing stations, wherein each poultry carrier is capable of restraining only one individual poultry at a time;

an identification tag associated with each poultry carrier of the plurality of poultry carriers; and

a control system operatively connected to the automated conveying system and the plurality of processing stations, the control system routing the plurality of poultry carriers along the automated conveying system and activating the plurality of processing stations as needed.

29. A system according to claim 28, wherein the plurality of processing stations comprises a weighing station, a beak treatment station, and a claw treatment station.

30. A system according to claim 28, wherein control system comprises a central controller controlling the automated conveying system and the plurality of processing stations.

31. A system according to claim 28, wherein the control system comprises a distributed control system comprising two or more computing elements controlling different components of the automated poultry processing system.

32. A system according to claim 28, wherein the automated conveying system connects one or more of the processing stations in a parallel configuration.

33. A system according to claim 28, wherein the automated conveying system connects the one or more of the processing stations in a serial configuration.

34. A system according to claim 28, wherein one or more of the processing stations comprise two or more bays.

hatchling

insert
"to"